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Author(s): Georg Morgenstierne

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'MUSHROOM' AND 'TOADSTOOL' IN INDO-IRANIAN

By Georg Morgenstierne

In their learned and sumptuously illustrated work *Mushrooms, Russia and history*,[1] Valentina Pavlovna Wasson and R. Gordon Wasson have given a comprehensive and fascinating survey of mushroom lore. All kinds of traditions and conceits connected with fungi have here been discussed, together with the often picturesque and fanciful, sometimes unsavoury names denoting them in many diverse languages. The etymologies are frequently quite clear, and give a good clue to the understanding of the strikingly parallel reactions evoked everywhere by 'the rich world of mushrooms and toadstools'. Other words are of uncertain origin, and in some cases we come across resemblances between words from unrelated and unconnected languages, which the philologist may be inclined to ascribe to 'mirages linguistiques'. A large number of specialists in various fields of research have contributed to the richness of the material collected and analysed by the authors.

From the Indo-Iranian languages I have had an opportunity of providing them with a certain number of words. Not all of them could find a suitable place in the general survey given by the Wassons. And besides, their book does not, of course, aim at presenting the Indo-Iranian words as a special group, but refers to them only in connexion with the various semantic and folkloristic notions discussed.

It may therefore be worth while to give a list of the words I have come across, together with such explanations as I am able to give.

My material is very far from being exhaustive. I have only had access to a limited number of dictionaries and vocabularies, and I rather doubt if any printed sources give full and detailed information about this subject. Nor have I been able to search for names of fungi in texts, or, except in a few cases, to make inquiries from native speakers. And, finally, my lack of mycological knowledge has made it impossible for me to identify the various species mentioned in my sources.

I can only hope that these stray notes may be a starting point for specialists fully conversant with one or other of the languages included in my survey.

It may be convenient to group the words, as far as it is possible, under certain semantic headings.

(1) Umbrella. The most ancient and common metaphor in Sanskrit is 'umbrella', 'parasol'[2]: *chattra(ka)*, *chattrikā* Lex.; *chattrāka* Ṣaḍv.Br., Manu, Yājñ., etc.[3] In modern IA, but not in the North-west, we find corresponding tatsamas and tadbhavas, e.g. Hi. *chatrā(k)*, *chatrak*, *chatā*; Guj.

[1] Vols. I, II, New York, Pantheon Books, 1957.

[2] Wasson, op. cit., 103, 362.

[3] Following Turner, ND, I shall use *c*, *j* for the palatal affricates, also in Dardic and Ir., and *ċ* for the dental affricate.

chatra, chattur; Mar. *chatrī*; Beng. *chātā*; Or. *chatrā, chatu, chatā*. This word has also been borrowed into Santali where it has retained its original significance 'head, anulus of a mushroom', generally with *ot'* 'mushroom' added,[1] and in contrast to *ḍaṇḍit'* 'stalk'.

The idea may be further determined. Thus *ahi-chattra(ka)* Nir. 'snake's umbrella'[2]; *sarpa-chattra(ka)*; Pali *ahi-chattaka*; Hi. *sā̃p kī chattrī*. Prs. *catr-i mār*, borrowed also into Hi., is in its turn probably calqued on some Indian prototype. Cf. also Hi. *sā̃p kī ṭopī*, or *roṭī* 'snake's hat, or bread'; Prs. *qārc-i mār* 'snake-mushroom'; Sulaimaniya Kurd. *qarcik-ə maranə* id.; Si. *sapiḍo*, diminutive of *sapu* 'snake'.

Other enlargements are Skt. *bhūmi-chattra* 'earth-umbrella'; Beng. *bhũi-chātā*[3]; *gomaya-chattra* 'dung-u.' (v. 12), Beng. *kāṭh-chātā* 'wood-u.', Or. *kāṭha-chatu*; Mar. *kutryā-ceṃ chatr* 'dog's u.', etc.

(2) Hat. Hi. *sā̃p kī ṭopī* 'snake's hat'; Guj. *kūtar-nī ṭopī* 'dog's hat'; Hi. *kulāh-i bārān* (from Prs.) 'rainhood'; Prs. *kulāh-i zamīn* 'earth-hat'[4]; *kulāh-i qāẓī* 'judge's hat'; Psht. *kāpər-xwaləī* 'pagan's hat'.

(3) Pot, Jar. Skt. *kumbha* 'jar' is used to denote other plants, but not mushrooms. In modern N.W. languages we find Hi. *khum(b)ī*; Lhd., Si. *khumbhī* (borrowed into Bal. *kumbīγ*), with metathesis Si. *phungī*; Panj., Lhd. *khumb*; Panj. *khumba, khumbur* 'truffle'; Lhd. *khambūr* 'large, edible fungus'. The IA word has also been borrowed into Psht.: Waziri *xōmba*,[5] Mohmand *xumbuṛī* (diminutive). Bahdinan Kurd. (Jardine) *kumbaluk* 'toad-stool', *kumbabok* (for **-lok* ?) 'fungus' might be derived from Kurd. **kumb* 'jar', but no such word seems to have been recorded in Kurd.

Finally we find in Tajiki Prs. *qūziqandī*, possibly for **qūza-i qandī* 'sugar jar' (v. 11).

(4) Bulb, Lump, Bubble. Skt. *kumbha* is also used for 'hump', etc., and it is possible that some of the words given above might as well be put under this heading. Skt. *bhūmi-kandaka* means 'earth-bulb' and *bhūmi-kandara* 'earth-ginger', but *kanda-ra* may be taken here in the less specialized sense of *kanda* 'bulb(ous root)' (v. 19). The derivation of Skt. *golāsa* from *gola* 'ball' is doubtful, but so is the alternative interpretation as **go-lāsa*.

Pashai *gocaī* 'a kind of black mushroom', Kshm. *g^{a}ch* 'edible mushroom, morel, Skt. *silindhram*', *kana-g^{a}ch* 'Morcella sp.', Panj. (*kānā-*)*guchi* 'Morcella esc., Phallus esc.' (Bhai Maya Singh, Panj.-Engl. dict., s.v. *padd*) are derived from Skt. *guccha* 'bunch, bundle, cluster'.

Psht. *gūmāṇḍū/ə* is borrowed from Panj. *ghumāṇḍ* 'hump'. Psht. *kobaləi, kobalakə* (acc. to the Pəẋto Qāmūs *sāqdār u šīrīn* 'having a stalk and sweet')

[1] Bodding, *A Santal dictionary*, IV, 481: 'Most fungi are called *ot'*, some are excepted, and these are considered animate'.

[2] For the 'snake' complex, cf. Wasson, 104, 374.

[3] cf. *bhūmi-kandaka* (v. 4); Hi. *dhartī kā phūl* (v. 16); Prs. *kulāh-i zamīn* (v. 2); *gūš(t)-i zamīn* (v. 8, 9); Psht. *zməkəī γwa^{x}a*.

[4] Not, with Wasson, 159, 'phallus'.

[5] Certainly not < Ir. **hwambā*, cf. Swed. *svamp* 'mushroom': etc.

is derived from Psht. *kwab, kob*, etc. ' hump ', *kūbəī* ' bubble '. But we also find Psht. *gobalakə* ' mushroom, bubble ', cf. *gop* ' hump '. The relation of this form of the word—if any—to Kurd. *gūbeḷek*, Galinqaya (Azarbaijan) *gōbalak* is uncertain.

Prs. *dumbalān* ' truffle ' [1]; Kurd. (Garzoni) *dumbalā* is derived from *dumbal, dummal* ' boil, swelling '.[2]

(5) SPONGE, TINDER. With Kurd. *kārī* ' mushroom ' cf. Prs. *γārī* ' sponge '. Kurd. *kivār* Soane (N. Group), *kīārk* Soane; *kevárk* Garzoni ' fongo '; *karg* de Morgan (Mukri) [3] ' champignon ' correspond to Hakkari Kurd. *kiwārk* ' amadou, tinder '. Cf. also Prs. *qū* ' tinder, fungus '.

(6) EGG, TESTICLE. Prs. *xāya-dīs* ' ovo similis '. But it seems possible that *s* (س) may be miswritten for *w* (و), and that **xāya-i dīw* corresponds to Si. *šaitān jo pelo* ' toadstool ', lit. ' devil's testicles '.[4]

(7) PHALLUS. Psht. *xar-γīṇe*, in the Pəxto Qāmūs translated by, and corresponding exactly to Kabuli Prs. *kēr-i xarak* ' ass's ph. '. It is stated to be inedible, but the Pəxto Sīnd gives *qabīḥ* (' base, obscene ') *k.-i x.* as the translation of Psht. *kāpər-xwalaī*, and says that it is edible.

(8) EAR. Kabuli Prs. *gōš-i zamīn* ' earth-ear ', beside *gōšt-i zamīn* (v. 9). Cf. Kshm. *kana-g^{a}ch*, etc. (4).[5] Psht. has also *pocəkəī* f., cf. *pocəkai* m. ' *narma-yi gōš*, the soft (lobe) of the ear ' (Pəxto Qāmūs); *narma-yi gōšt, ḥiṣṣa-yi zērīn-i gōš* ' soft, tender flesh, the lower part of the ear ' (Pəxto Sīnd).

(9) FLESH, MEAT. Kab. Prs. *gōšt-i zamīn*, Psht. *zməkəī γwaxə* ' earth-meat '. Cf. Kshm. *māz-khěl* ' Agaricus campestris ', lit. ' meat-lotus '.[6]

It may be noted that most Tibetan names of fungi contain the word *śa* ' meat '.

The interpretation of Pali *sūkara-maddava*, the food which caused Buddha's fatal illness, lit. ' soft (tender) boar's flesh ', as a kind of truffles is very doubtful, and even if it were correct, it would rather have to be interpreted as ' boar's delicacy '.

(10) BREAD, CHEESE, BUTTER. Hi. *sāp kī roṭī* ' snake's bread '; Afdari [7] *kalāγ-nūn* ' crow's bread '. In Waigali Kafiri we find *kiläṛīk* ' mushroom ', cf. *kilā*, Pashai dial. *kelāṛek* ' cheese '. Also the Afghan Academy's Waigali vocabulary has *kī 'aṇ-xāk* ' mushroom ', which must be interpreted as **kīṛaṇ-xāk* ' earth-cheese '. Note also Burushaski *pfute maltaṣ*, lit. ' demon's butter '.[8]

(11) SWEETNESS. Apte, in his Engl.-Skt., but not in his Skt.-Engl. dictionary, gives Skt. *madhurikā* ' fungus ', but the PW has only the meaning ' Anethum

[1] Acc. to an informant in Persepolis it grows in the steppe after lightning.
[2] Wasson, 121.
[3] *Nevark* (Jardine, Bahdinan Kurd.) is probably due to a misprint.
[4] Wasson, 173.
[5] ' Issued from the earth at the noise of thunder.'
[6] Wasson, 230.
[7] Prs. dialect from the neighbourhood of Semnan.
[8] Wasson, 154.

panmorium '. Uncertain is also Si. (Dulamal Bulchand, Engl.-Si. dict.) *syrw* (**sīrō* ?) ' mushroom ', cf. *sīrō* ' a kind of sweetmeat, made of flour, ghí and sugar ' (Stack, Si.-Engl. dict.). Cf. also Taj. Prs. *qūziqandī* (v. 3).

(12) DUNG. Skt. *gomaya-ja, viḍ-ja* ' dung-born '. Cf. *gomaya-chattra* (1), and Nep. *gobre cyāu* ' dung mushroom '.

(13) URINE. *Kukur-mut(t)ā* ' dog's urine ' seems to be the most common word for ' toadstool ' in Hi.[1] Cf. Mar. *kutyā-ceṃ mūt* id. Lorimer gives Shina *šunūtur* as the equivalent of Burushaski *šūtur* ' a kind of mushroom, or truffle (?) '. It is very tempting to take the Bur. word to be borrowed from Shina, and to derive the Shina word from **šunõūtr* < **śuno-mūtra*. In that case the Shina word must, in its turn, be a loanword from a dialect which retains *tr*.

(14) BREATH, FLATUS. Badakhshi Prs. *pufuk* (acc. to Yidgha s.v. *xar-pūst*) ; Munji *pufānek*, cf. Prs. *puf* ' puff, blow ' (Engl. ' puff-ball ' !).

Panj. *padd* ' flatus, mushroom ' ; *padd baheṛā* ' Agaricus campestris ' (*baheṛā* ' Beleric myrobalan ') ; Lhd. *paḍḍ ḅaheṛā* ' a kind of fungus '.

(15) DUST. Hi. *gagan-dhūl* ' mushroom ' (*Bhāṣā-Śabda-Kośa* ; Bhārgava). But acc. to Platts, Fallon, Bate only ' dust of the ketkī flower (Pandanus odoratissimus) '.

(16) FLOWER. Hi. *dhartī kā phūl* (Bate), lit. ' earth-flower '.

(17) VARIOUS PLANTS. Mar. *kaḷambeṃ* < Skt. *kaḍamba* ' stalk, Convolvulus repens ', *kadamba* ' Nauclea cadamba ', etc. But cf. also Skt. *bhūmi-kadamba* Lex. ' a kind of Kadamba ', possibly a kind of mushroom. Mar. *āḷambeṃ* ' Agaricus campestris ', Pkt. *ālaṃba* n. (Pāïa-Sadda-Mahaṇṇava) ' *bhūmi-chattra* '. But Skt. only *ālambā* ' a species of plant with poisonous leaves ' (*ālamba* n. ' supporting ').

Kshm. *māz-khěl* ' Agaricus campestris ', cf. *khěl* ' lotus leaf ' (v. 9).

(18) VARIA. Hi. *qudratī* (Dekhani) < Ar. ' natural, growing wild '. Si. *sapiḍo*, diminutive of *sapu* ' snake '. Psht. *ḍīngrəī* ' a very large mushroom, weighing from ½ charak to ½ seer, related to the smaller *xreṛai* ' (Pəxto Sīnd). Acc. to the Pəxto Qāmūs also ' pole for drawing water from a well '. Cf. *ḍīng* ' stork '. *Ḍīngrəī* probably denotes a mushroom with a very tall stalk. Yidgha *xar-pūst* ' white mushroom ' (= Badakhshi Prs. *pufuk*), < *Prs. lit. ' donkey's skin '. Psht. *stūrəī* f. (PQ), *störai* m. (Waziri) ' (hill) mushroom ', apparently connected with *storai* ' star '. According to the botanist Professor R. Nordhagen some species of fungi might actually call up such an association.

(19) An interesting word with complicated ramifications is Skt. *śilīndhra*. As a masc. it denotes i.a. ' plantain tree (Musa sapientum) ', as a neuter ' mushroom, flower of a plantain tree ', cf. *śilīndhraka* ' mushroom, especially one growing out of cow-dung ', Or. tatsama *silind(h)ra* ' mushroom, plantain tree '.

In Śiśupālavadha VI, 32, 72 (*śilīdhra-sugandhibhiḥ* ; *śilīndhre* . . . *alinī*

[1] But Or. *kukura-mūtā* ' tulasī (plant) '.

. . . *aramata*) the word evidently denotes '(plantain) flower'. Also in Megh. 12 (other editions 11) Hultzsch (in his vocabulary) translates *uc-chilīndhrām, ut-silīndhrām* 'on which the flowers of the plantain tree have appeared', following Vallabhadeva's explanation: *udbhūta-śilīndhrākhyakusumām.* But it gives a better meaning, to take, with Gildemeister and others, *śilīndhra* to be, not a flower, but a mushroom, and to translate 'when they hear thy sweet-sounding thunder, which is able to cover the earth with mushrooms . . .', the whole referring to the well-known notion of fungi appearing after thunder.[1] This interpretation is also presupposed by the reading *ucchilīndhrātapatrām* 'having mushrooms as its umbrella'. Mallinātha, *ad* Megh. 11 (Nirṇaya Sāg.) explains: *udbhūta-kandalikām*, adding, from Śabdārṇava, *kandalyāṃ ca śilīndhrā syāt.* The same quotation is given by him *ad* Śiś. VI, 32 (BBS) in the form *kadalyāṃ ca śilīndhraḥ syāt*, and here, and *ad* VI, 72, *śilīndhra* is rendered by *kandalī-kusuma. Kadalī* is 'Musa sapientum', and the same meaning is given also for *kandalī.* But it seems possible that *kandala/ī* may denote also a mushroom,[2] and that some confusion has taken place between *kandala* and *kandara* (v. 4).

Śilī means i.a. 'a female frog', and it is possible to analyse *śilīṃ-dhra* as 'frog-holding', cf. Engl. 'toad-stool'.[3] In Or. we find a tatsama *sil(ī)* 'mushroom, toadstool, female frog'.

From Pkt. may be quoted *silindha 'vṛkṣaviśeṣa, chattraḥ vṛkṣa, bhūmi-sphoṭavṛkṣa'* (Pāïa-Sadda-Mahaṇṇava).

Apart from Or. *silindā* 'Celulus (?) villosus', which I have not been able to identify, I have come across no Modern IA tadbhavas corresponding exactly to *śilīndhra.* But in some Dardic languages we find words which, in spite of phonetic divergencies, seem to be connected with it. Lorimer, in his Burushaski vocabulary, gives *širijun* 'mushroom', no doubt a loanword from the identical Shina word (identified with Khowar *quċi*, v. below). If the *j* is cerebral, which is quite possible,[4] this word may be derived from **śiridhraṇa*, or, with dissimilation, **śilidhraṇa.* Lorimer's Shina word is probably taken from the Gilgit dialect. From Guresi Grahame Bailey gives *šinṭīli*, and from Kohistani *šiṭhīli.* I find it difficult to believe that these words are not somehow connected with *śilīndhra*, perhaps through a form **śir(i)nthili-.*

Kshm. has *hĕḍur* m. 'mushroom, Agaricus sp.' and *hĕnḍa* f. 'mushroom, especially edible'.[5] The first form must go back to **śiṇḍhara*, with loss of nasalization as in *hāgur^u* = *hãgur^u* 'an aquatic bird'; *höri(n)j^ü* 'bow'; *haḍ^{u}rü* 'the pain of a frostbite', cf. *haṇdur^u* 'extremely cold'. In *hĕnḍa* we can only recognize an initial element **śiṇḍh-* (< **śirindh-* ?).

[1] Wasson, 121.

[2] But scarcely Ragh. XIII, 29, cf. PW, s.v. 'vielleicht Pilz'.

[3] Wasson, 66.

[4] cf. Lorimer, *The Burushaski language*, I, 5: 'Personally I have experienced a difficulty in certainly distinguishing *č* (read: *ċ*) *j ṡ ẓ* from *č j* (= *ǰ*) *š ž*'.

[5] Wasson, 120.

Finally Yidgha, an Iranian dialect spoken in Chitral and containing many loanwords from IA Khowar, has *ċigyerë*. Yd. *gy* goes back to *ṇḍ*,[1] and *ċ-* may stand for *s-*, as in Yd. *ċᵊkən* = Munji *s(ᵊ)kən* ' puppy '. We thus arrive at an earlier form **siṇḍera* (with *-ë* from a common type of native Yd. words). There can be little doubt that the word has been borrowed from a lost Khowar form.

Regarding the whole group of words it must be remembered that the Skt. form may not be the original one, but may represent an adaptation of a word borrowed from an unknown, non-Aryan source.

(20) For the sake of completeness—as far as my material goes—I shall mention also some other Indo-Ir. words which I am unable to explain.

In Skt. we find *kavaka* and *kyāku* Āpastamba, etc., from which probably Nep. *cyāu* (v. Turner, s.v.), W. Pahari (Joshi) *cyāũ*, *ceũ*, Jaunsari (*LSI*) *cyāũ* (*-myāũ*). The connexion proposed by Lidén [2] with Greek *σαπρός* is untenable for phonetic reasons.

Apte, in his English-Skt. dictionary s.v. ' fungus ', gives also *miśi* ; *miśreyā*, *s/śāleya* ; *śiti-śiva*, but other sources, including his Skt.-Engl. dict., do not mention this meaning of the words in question. Thus *miśi*, *śāleya* are given by MW as ' Anethum sowa, dill ', etc.

Other Modern IA words are :

Shina, gilg. *šũṭ* (Grahame Bailey), *ṣu·ət* (Lorimer) ' toadstool '. Cf. Khowar *šuti*, *šutanzk*, etc., acc. to O'Brien ' a large white mushroom '. Khow. also has *brangálu* (used to translate Yidgha *ċigyerë*), which can scarcely have anything to do with *bran* ' ram '. Another Khow. word is *quċi* (*xuċi*), and Kalasha has *kuċi* and *kaméyu*. Pashai, beside *gocaī* (v. 4), has *bax* ' a white, flesh-like, edible mushroom, growing in the hills and sold for one rupee for half a charak '. From Kati the Afghan Academy voc. gives *gagaṭālūk*.

On the Ir. side Prs. *qārc* (of Turkish origin ?) has been recorded from many dialects (e.g. Tajiki, Kermanshahi, Ashtiyani). Cf. also Prs. *q.-i mār*, *q.-i qallātī* and Sulaimaniya Kurd. *qarcik*, Yaghnobi *xarcak*, possibly influenced by *xar* ' ass ' (but note also Tajiki *q/xorc*).

Another Prs. word is *samārūq/γ*, of unknown origin. Acc. to Steingass it denotes ' a white, egg-like mushroom '. There is a variant with initial *z-*, and in Taj. *zambūraγ* (cf. *zambūr* ' wasp ') is given as the primary form, before *samorūγ*.

I was told (in Persepolis) that *hakkal* is a poisonous toadstool. Acc. to Steingass *hagal*, *hukal* is white and egg-like. Cf. also Fars dialect (Mann) *häkäl*.

Other Prs. words are *ākām ; ākāris*, *ākārs/š* ; *tu/irfās*, acc. to Vullers ' grown under jars and in salty places '.

In Psht. we find, beside the words mentioned above : *xəreṛai* ' a mushroom

[1] Morgenstierne, *Yidgha-Munji phonology*, § 121 (*IIFL*, II, p. 79).
[2] *Studien*, 51 sq., cf. Boisacq, s.v.

appearing in spring after thunder, in sandy places. The head is semicircular (*nīm-girda*), it is boiled with meat and is very delicious. It corresponds to Prs. *samārūq*, or *gōšt-i zamīn*, it is of the same kind as *ḍīngrəī*, but smaller' (Pəẋto Sīnd). Note also *marxeṛai* ; *pərmeṛa* (= *pocakəī*) and *ṭandūs* ' growing in moist places in spring '.

Ossetic *sok'o, zok'o, k'ozo* is borrowed from Georgian *sok'o*.

Addenda

Ad (1). According to information given by H. Hendriksen the Koṭgaṛh dialect of W. Pahari has *rɛci* which he thinks may be derived from **rājacchatrikā* ' king's parasol '. (Phonetically a derivation from *rātrikā* ' nocturnal ' might also be possible.)

Ad (4). Jaba-Justi's derivation (p. 367) of Kurd. *gūbelek* from Russ. *guba* is very improbable. Cf. also Khorasan Kurd. *gabbalek*. acc. to Houtum-Schindler (*ZDMG*, XXXVIII, 1884, 84) from Turkish. With Psht. *gūmāndū* cf. also Sutan Pashai (acc. to Dr. G. Buddruss) *gumaṛã*.

Ad (5). Amārlū-Kurd. (Houtum-Schindler) *gewérg, gewârg*.

Ad (8). Mazandarani (de Morgan) *gouch-é dar* (**gūš-i dār*) ' wood- ' or ' tree-ear '. Talaqani (acc. to Mr. A. Hannibal in Teheran) *kemangush* ' bow-ear ' (?).

Ad (9). Chilās Pashai (Buddruss) *sã pīu̯* (lit. ' earth-meat ') ' Pilz = Psht. *də zməkē γu̯axa* '.

Ad (20). Ir. *qārc(ik)* also in Maz., Gurani, etc. Laristani *ak/qāl* and *akāl-e sagū* ' dog's mushroom ' (A. Egtedari, Farhange Laristani) ; *dol* ' white mushroom or truffle, light of weight ' ; *xeer* (خهر) ' a kind of truffle '. Talaqani (Hannibal) *gevnangom* (گونانگم).